

MINUTES

BLEOST MEETING

May 11, 2023

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Chairman Greg Pollan.

Roll Call:

The Chair called the roll, and a quorum was established. Board members present were:

Chief Anjuan Brown
Hon. Lindsay Watts Cranford
Col. Randy Ginn
Chief Michael Hall
Deputy Charles Harris
Sheriff Jim Johnson
Dr. Steve Mallory
Constable Glenn McKay
Sheriff Greg Pollan
Chief John Mark Quaka
Chief Daniel Sanford

Board Counsel Samuel Goff

Board members not present were:

Hon. Kassie Coleman
Mayor Gary Rhoads

Introduction of Guests, Introductory Remarks:

The guests were introduced and were welcomed.

Speakers/Guests present were:

Lt. Mike Cowan - DeSoto Co. S.O.
Major Steve Palmer – DeSoto Co. S.O.
Lt. Brandon Hendry – HCLETA
Sheriff K.C. Hamp – Tunica Co. S.O.
Deputy Justin Holpe – Tunica Co. S.O.
Officer Sandra White McCollough – Hollandale P.D.
Deputy Lauren Rhea – Training Director, Lowndes Co. S.O.

Staff Members Present were:

Program Supervisor Robert Davis
Program Specialist Donna Rogers-Perkins

Program Specialist Risa Turpin
Program Specialist Michael Nash
Program Specialist Donna Rogers
Program Specialist Marie Fivecoat

Approval of Minutes:

A copy of the minutes from the meeting on March 9, 2023, was emailed to each member. Sheriff Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Col. Ginn seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition.

OLD BUSINESS

In-Service Training – Request for Approval:

- 1. Living Works Safe Talk (Suicide) - 4 hours; Mental Health First Aid for Public Safety - 8 hours: Lifecore Health Group, Amy Young-Director.**
- 2. MS Sheriffs' Association 2023 Summer Conference - 14 hours.**
- 3. Emergency Services Administrative Professional Association 2023 Conference - 8.5 hours.**
- 4. 2023 MS Conference for Addiction Professionals - 19.5 hours**
- 5. CTS Impact Munitions Class (Combined Systems Less Lethal Course) - 4 hours, Instructor Corey Havelin.**
- 6. Stress Management for Law Enforcement Officers - 8 hours; Understanding and Communicating with the Mentally Ill for Law Enforcement Officers - 8 hours; Jeny Price/Alta Richardson.**

These topics were presented to the Board for approval. Chief Brown made a motion to approve, and Chief Quaka seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition.

NEW BUSINESS

Discuss BLEOST Budget:

The Director reported that the funding to support the Board is running low this year. At some point, the Board may need to address the current tuition rate.

Certification of Officers:

Director Davis presented 6 full-time academy classes and 2 part-time academy classes for certification pending completion of all requirements.

Forty-two full-time and fourteen part-time equivalency of training candidates were presented for certification pending completion of all requirements. The Chair entertained a motion. Sheriff Johnson made a motion to approve the full-time classes, the part-time classes, and the

equivalency candidates for certification subject to meeting all requirements. Dr. Mallory seconded the motion. The motion was adopted without opposition.

Director's Report:

The Director reported that 10 names of fallen officers have been added to the Law Enforcement Monument. A memorial service will be held on May 16. The names were presented to the Board.

The Director thanked Michael Nash for his years of dedication to the Office of Standards and Training. He will retire on June 30, 2023.

Certification Review Hearing for Officer Sandra White McCollough:

The Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training (BLEOST) received a "Full-Time Law Enforcement Application for Certification" from the Hollandale Police Department indicating that this agency hired Officer McCollough as a law enforcement officer on 7/5/2022. Based on information in this officer's certification file, the Board's staff has determined that she was not eligible for certification. Officer McCollough requested this hearing to explain to the Board why she should be allowed to be eligible for certification.

The Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards & Training (BLEOST) has been provided information that she was indicted on September 26, 2018, in relation to crimes involving moral turpitude or that are directly related to the duties and responsibilities of a law enforcement officer. Her conduct violates the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics and greatly diminishes the public trust in the competence and reliability of a law enforcement officer. She was charged with Conspiracy and Insurance Fraud, Cause # 2018-0167. She willfully falsified a written police report and conspired with another to commit Insurance Fraud on December 28, 2016, while working as a law enforcement officer with the Washington County Sheriff's Department. According to the record, she was certified by the BLEOST as a law enforcement officer on March 30, 2006, certificate number 18361.

As part of a plea agreement with the State of Mississippi concerning the felony charges against her in the Washington County Circuit Court, Cause # 2018-0167, she permanently surrendered her Mississippi State Law Enforcement Certification to the BLEOST and the State of Mississippi. She agreed to be prohibited from ever being allowed to work again, within the State of Mississippi, as a law enforcement officer, whether certified or not.

Mr. Davis presented a 31-page document to be marked as exhibit 1 taken from Officer McCollough's file to back up the allegations.

Officer McCollough explained to the Board the events leading to her indictment and her accepting a permanent surrender of her certification. The other person involved in this incident was her stepson. She denied the accusations made in the indictment, and stated that she only accepted the surrender of her certification to keep from possibly going to jail.

The Chair entertained a motion. Sheriff Johnson made a motion to go into closed session to consider whether to declare an executive session, Constable McKay seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition. Eleven members were present. Constable McKay made a motion to enter into executive session to consider the allegations of misconduct and evidence produced during open proceedings, and the possible issuance of an appealable order. Chief Hall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

After executive session was completed, the Chair invited everyone back to the meeting room. Constable McKay made a motion to come out of executive session, seconded by Sheriff Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

The Chair announced that after deliberations in Executive Session, the Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards & Training finds that:

The Board has promulgated policy and procedure whereby: the Board may reject any unqualified applicant for certification by a classification of not eligible for certification, and reserves the right to reprimand, suspend or cancel and recall any certificate when any conduct or action would greatly diminish the public trust in the competence and reliability of a law enforcement officer and the holder has been convicted, pled guilty, fined, ordered into probation in relation to a crime involving moral turpitude or a crime directly related to duties and responsibilities of a law enforcement officer.

Clear and convincing evidence was placed before the Board that you violated the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics and committed actions that would greatly diminish the public trust in your competence and reliability as a law enforcement officer.

The Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training issued the professional certificate number 18361 in the name of Sandra White.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Upon consideration of the testimony presented today, and pursuant to Mississippi Code, Section 45-6-7, the Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training has promulgated policy for the administration of the Law Enforcement Officers Training Program (LEOTP) allowing the Board the authority to reject any unqualified applicant for certification by a classification of not eligible for certification. Any conduct or action that would greatly diminish the public trust in the competence and reliability of a law enforcement officer would be actionable as due cause for reprimand, suspension, recall or cancellation of a certificate.

In Executive Session, after considering the facts presented, the Board voted unanimously (11-0) to cancel certificate number 18361 in the name of Sandra White. This action is effective on May 11, 2023.

Certification Review Hearing for Officer Justin Holpe:

The Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training (BLEOST) received a “Full-Time Law Enforcement Application for Certification” from the Tunica County Sheriff’s Department. This agency hired Officer Justin Holpe as a law enforcement officer on 12/30/2022. Based on information in his certification file, the Board’s staff has determined that he is not eligible for

certification. Officer Holpe requested to have the Board hear his explanation.

The Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards & Training (BLEOST) has been provided with information that Officer Holpe was dismissed from the Holly Springs Police Department on January 5, 2021. He was terminated for misuse of the city gas card. On his application for certification from the Tunica County Sheriff's Department and a previous application for certification from the Mississippi Department of Corrections, he answered "no" to the question, "Have you ever been terminated from any employment". This answer was not correct. His conduct greatly diminishes the public trust in the competence and reliability of a law enforcement officer and violates the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics. According to the record, he was certified by the BLEOST as a law enforcement officer on November 30, 2017, certificate number 25956.

Mr. Davis presented a 25-page document, a 5-page document and a video to be marked as exhibits 1,2, and 3 taken from Officer Holpe's file to back up the allegations.

Officer Holpe presented letters of recommendation to the Board. He explained his actions that lead to this hearing. He denied misusing the city Fuelman card. He stated that the former Chief of Police ordered him to use the card to fill up the Chief's two fraternity brother's vehicles. He stated that he had reported misconduct by the Chief to the Mayor and he knew he would receive backlash from the Chief. He stated he was set up by the Chief. He said that he gave notice of resignation after he reported the Chief, he stated that he was not dismissed. He did admit that he didn't report on his application to Tunica Co. that he had worked at Holly Springs because he knew they weren't fond of him. Officer Holpe stated that he has made mistakes and learned from them, and he hopes the Board will allow him to continue with his job at Tunica County. Sheriff Hamp of Tunica County spoke on Officer Holpe's behalf.

The Chair entertained a motion. Constable McKay made a motion to go into closed session to consider whether to declare an executive session, Dr. Mallory seconded the motion. The motion passed without opposition. Eleven members were present. Constable McKay made a motion to enter into executive session to consider the allegations of misconduct and evidence produced during open proceedings, and the possible issuance of an appealable order. Chief Hall seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

After executive session was completed, the Chair invited everyone back to the meeting room. Constable McKay made a motion to come out of executive session, seconded by Dr. Mallory. The motion passed unanimously.

The Chair announce that after deliberations in Executive Session, the Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards & Training finds that:

The Board has promulgated policy and procedure whereby: the Board may reject any unqualified applicant for certification by a classification of not eligible for certification, and reserves the right to reprimand, suspend or cancel and recall any certificate when any conduct or action would greatly diminish the public trust in the competence and reliability of a law enforcement officer and the holder

has been convicted, pled guilty, fined, ordered into probation in relation to a crime involving moral turpitude or a crime directly related to duties and responsibilities of a law enforcement officer.

Clear and convincing evidence was placed before the Board that you violated the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics and committed actions that would greatly diminish the public trust in your competence and reliability as a law enforcement officer.

The Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training issued the professional certificate number 25956 in the name of Justin T. Holpe.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Upon consideration of the testimony presented today, and pursuant to Mississippi Code, Section 45-6-7, the Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training has promulgated policy for the administration of the Law Enforcement Officers Training Program (LEOTP) allowing the Board the authority to reject any unqualified applicant for certification by a classification of not eligible for certification. Any conduct or action that would greatly diminish the public trust in the competence and reliability of a law enforcement officer would be actionable as due cause for reprimand, suspension, recall or cancellation of a certificate.

In Executive Session, after considering the facts presented, the Board voted unanimously (11-0) to cancel certificate number 25956 in the name of Justin T. Holpe. This action is effective on May 11, 2023.

Next Scheduled Meeting:

The Chair recognized Col. Ginn. Col. Ginn made a motion to form a committee made up of members of the Board and Academies to study the basic full-time curriculum to see if updates, changes, or modifications are needed to be in line and in the best interest with things we are facing in 2023. Deputy Harris seconded the motion. The Board discussed this issue, and the motion was approved without opposition. Col. Ginn made a motion to review the guidelines for the part-time academies, curriculum, and methods to ensure the qualities of the Board are being followed. Chief Sanford seconded the motion, and it was approved without opposition.

Director Davis asked the Board about certain cases that are pending. The Board gave their thoughts on these cases. It was suggested to request that the AG's office help determine the status of officers that have had felony charges dismissed or nol-prossed.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2023.

Concluding Remarks; Adjournment:

The Chair entertained a motion to adjourn. Sheriff Johnson made a motion with a second from Chief Sanford, no opposition, the meeting adjourned at 1:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Davis

Director, Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training